

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 2-16 are currently pending and under examination in the application; claims 2-14 stand rejected and claims 15-16 stand objected as being dependent from a rejected base claim. Notwithstanding the grounds for any rejection and without prejudice to pursuing the encompassed subject matter in a related divisional, continuation, or continuation-in-part application, by the present amendment, rejected claims 2-14 are canceled and objected to claims 15 and 16 are re-written in independent format. No new matter is added by these amendments. Support for the amendments can be found in the specification and in the claims, *e.g.*, claim 3.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for alleged obviousness over Azizi *et al.* (*PNAS USA* 95:3908-3913 (1998)). Claims 15 and 16, however, are merely objected to as dependent from a rejected base claim.

Applicants submit that claims 1-14 are not obvious over Azizi *et al.* Nonetheless, without acquiescence to any ground for rejection, and solely to expedite prosecution of certain embodiments of Applicants' invention, Applicants have canceled rejected claims 2-14, thereby obviating this basis of rejection.

Applicants have re-written claims 15 and 16 in independent format, including all limitations previously recited in claim 3, from which claim 15 and 16 previously depended, thereby overcoming the objection to these claims as being dependent from a rejected base claim. Applicants further note that claims 15 and 16 are non-obvious over Azizi *et al.*, as acknowledged by the Examiner in not rejecting these claims under Section 103. In view of the above amendments, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the remaining objection to the claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that remaining claims 15 and 16 are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Application No. 09/980,614
Reply to Final Office Action dated January 15, 2008

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,
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